

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

VIOLET VARONA-LUKENS
Executive Officer



August 6, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Violet Varona-Lukens
Executive Officer

Subject: **2nd REVISED Status of Board Directives re: Open Government**
(Syn. 49, Item 47, of July 16, 2002)

This memo is in response to your Board's direction at the meeting of July 16, 2002 that I provide you with a status report on measures your Board has ordered with respect to open government. Based on clarification by the Chief Administrative Officer, who was involved in the recommendations prior to his vacation, the report has been revised to correctly reflect actions taken by your Board on July 16 with respect to Items 9, 12 and 13, below.

Measures contained in Item S-2 (Syn. 94) of April 2, 2002

Item 1 Tape recording of closed sessions

As previously reported, my office redrafted the closed session procedures that your Board had approved earlier in the year to require that the minute book of closed session meetings include an audio recording of the meeting. I implemented this practice beginning with the closed session meeting held on April 16, 2002 after your Board's approval of the revised procedures on April 2.

Item 2 Children's Services Inspector General reports

As previously reported, reports of the Children's Services Inspector General (CSIG) are no longer subject to discussion in closed session. They are dealt with during public portion of your Board's meetings. The revised closed session procedures approved April 2 also reflect this change. However, since that date, no CSIG reports have been submitted for your consideration.

Item 3 Post Board letters and departmental backup materials on the web

As reported April 25, 2002, the Executive Office began posting additional departmental backup materials linked to agenda items on our web page beginning with material for the meeting of April 23, 2002.

Item 4 Official transcript and corresponding video segments on-line

As reported by the CAO, this item would require a Board motion. A cost estimate was provided to your Board on April 26, 2002.

Also, as I previously reported, to facilitate accuracy of the transcript my office issued protocols to require that department and district heads and departmental representatives sign-in upon arrival at Board meetings. This practice began with the April 23 Board meeting.

Item 5 Adopt policy for releasing official documents to the public

The CAO is following up with several departments that are not yet in compliance with the Board's direction on this item. Also, there are four smaller departments that are working with the Chief Information Officer and the Internal Services Department to create a centralized web site on which they can post their Board reports.

Item 6 Renew the Board's Policy to expeditiously honor press requests for records

In accordance with your Board's direction, on June 11, 2002 the sunset review date of Section 3.140 of the Board Policy Manual regarding press requests on the County's Intranet site was extended to March 29, 2013. The CAO further reports that this policy has been placed on the County's web site.

Item 7 Prepare materials and conduct seminars for staff of bodies that operate under the Brown Act

The County Counsel and our Commissions Services staff conducted the first Brown Act seminar for an expanded "audience" that includes departmental staff and County commission and committee chairs on July 18, 2002. The seminar provides extensive instruction on relevant provisions of the Brown Act. The next seminar is scheduled for October 17, 2002.

Item 8 Countywide Public Records Act Protocol

The CAO reports that the Board's official policy has been placed on the County's web site under a new link entitled "Public Records." Each department was directed to post on their web sites the location where the public can access public records held by the department. A large number of departments still have not complied with this direction. The CAO will follow up with these departments to ensure that they comply quickly. The CAO also reports that he will post on his department's "Public Records" page a list showing where documents held by other County departments can be viewed.

Item 9 Review by outside counsel of open government proposals

At your Board's meeting of May 14, 2002, the firm of Brown Winfield and Canzoneri orally presented its report dated May 9, 2002.

Item 10 Board Deputies meetings conducted in accordance with the Brown Act

This policy, as drafted by County Counsel and submitted to your Board on May 8, 2002, has been adhered to by the Board Deputies since May. Upon recommendation by the CAO, your Board clarified the circumstances under which Board Deputies meetings are to be conducted under the Brown Act. This policy, as submitted by the County Counsel, was formally approved on July 16, 2002.

Item 11 CAO to report on the budget allocation/costs for use of outside counsel

The CAO submitted a memo report and cost estimate to your Board on May 13, 2002. The CAO has informed me that, as of this date, the County has paid outside counsel \$219,131.00, broken down as follows: Brown Act expenses \$40,977.41; *L.A. Times* lawsuit \$178,153.59.

Item 12 Policy concerning legality of Board directives

As instructed, on May 8, 2002 the County Counsel submitted to your Board a draft policy.

Item 13 Draft amendments to the Rules of the Board to alter meeting procedures

As instructed, on May 8, 2002 the County Counsel submitted to your Board draft amendments to the Rules of the Board concerning (1) a roll call vote for each non-consent agenda item, (2) a fuller explanation on the agenda of each Closed Session item and (3) announcement of actions taken during Closed Session meetings.

Item 14 Place Supervisors' names and vote tabulations on the video tape

The CAO reports that Network Television Time has completed its cost estimate for this project and it is being evaluated by the Public Affairs Office.

Other Related Projects

As directed by your Board on July 16, 2002, my office is working with the Internal Services Department to provide the public with access to the Board Policy Manual through the Board's Intranet web site, while still providing access to the manual to County employees whose access is limited to the County Intranet site.

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The CAO reports the following other projects relating to open government that were requested by your Board. All items are in the procurement stage and are expected to be installed by late September 2002.

- Video media feed
This will allow the news media attending Board meetings to do live broadcasts of the meetings.
- Captioning reader board
A reader board will be installed in the Board Room to assist the hard-of-hearing.
- Flat screen monitor outside the Board Hearing Room
This will allow members of the public who are not in the Board Room to follow the proceedings.
- Upgraded lighting in the Board Hearing Room
This will provide better, energy efficient lighting for the broadcast.

Attachment

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel